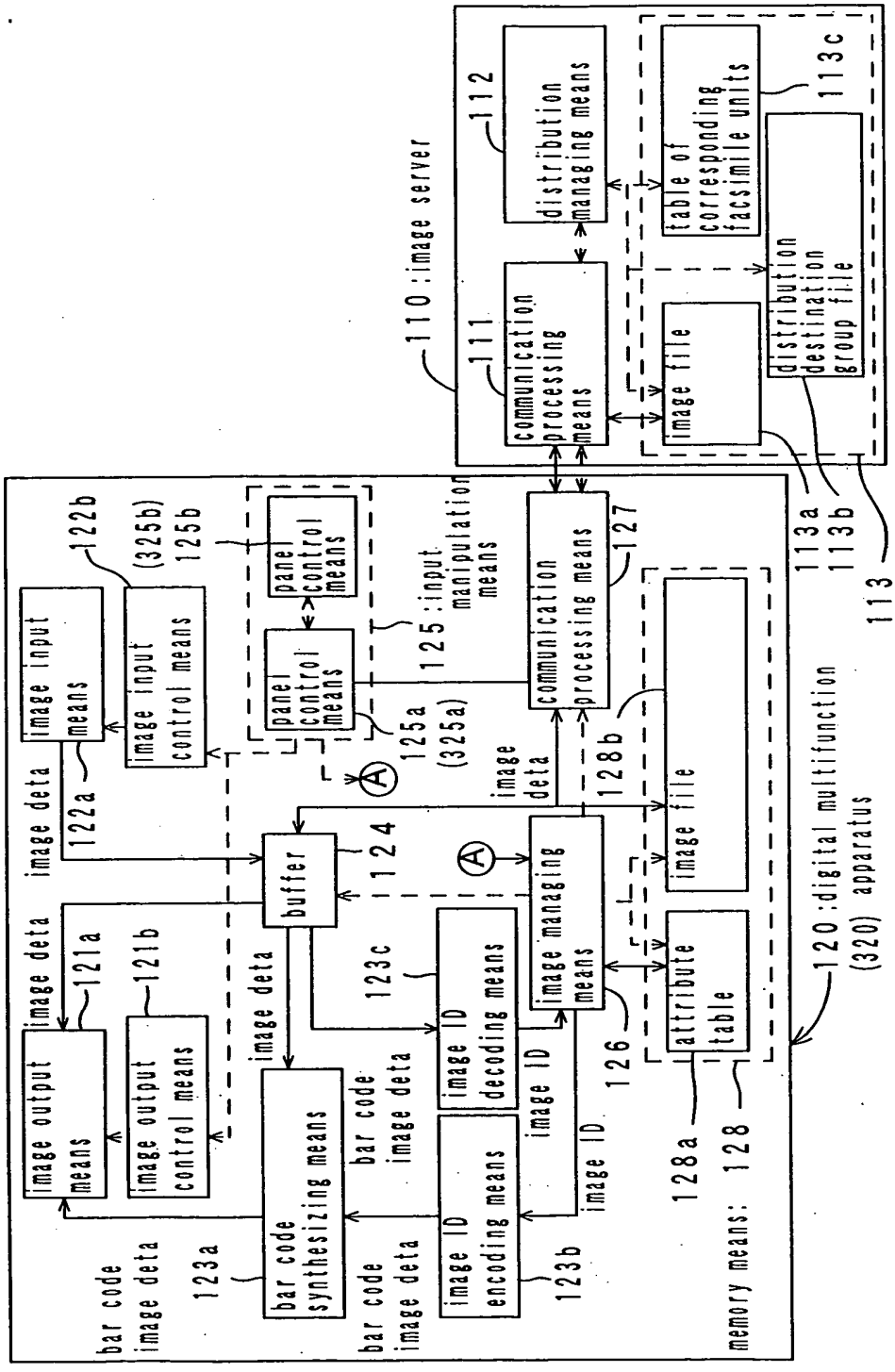
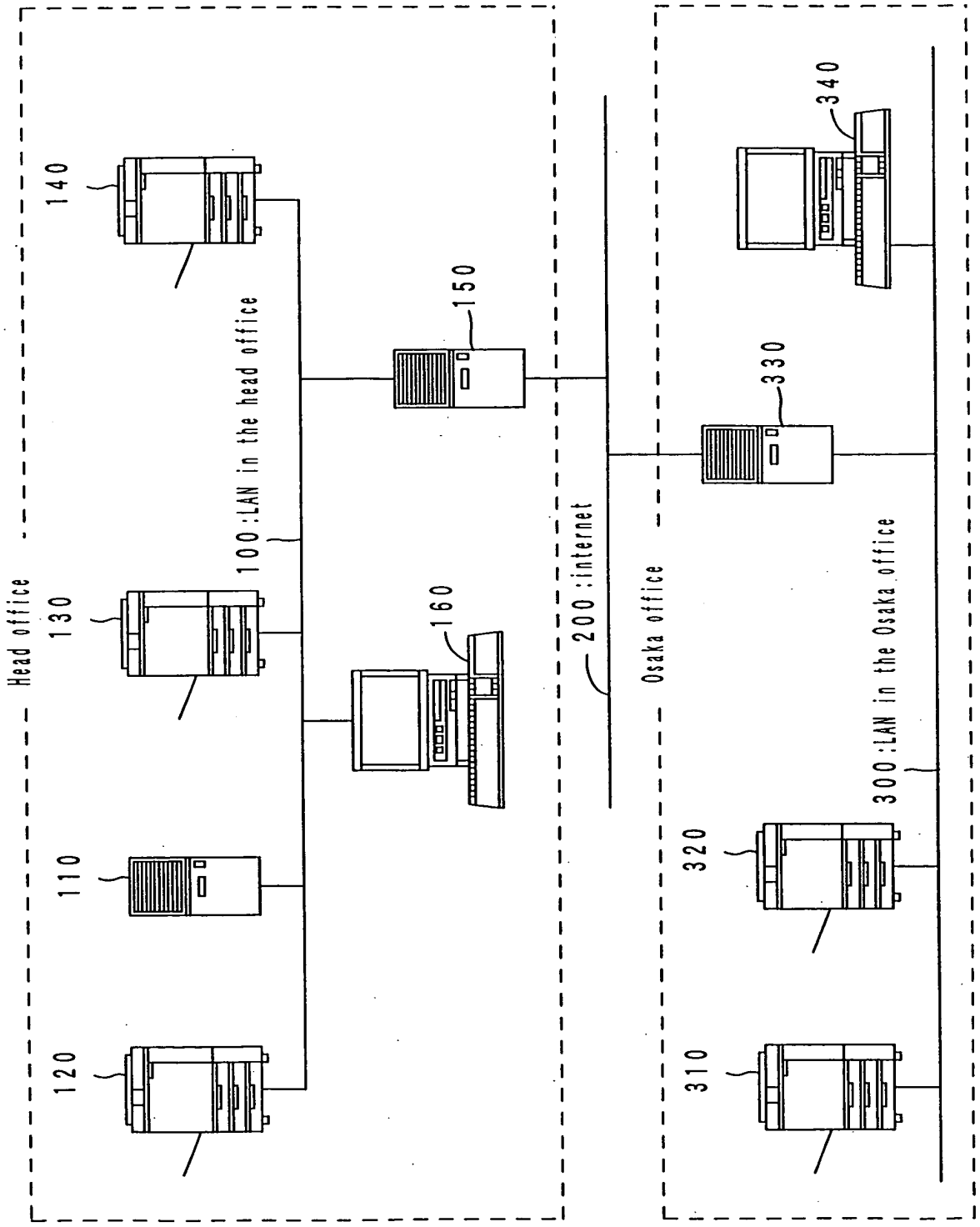
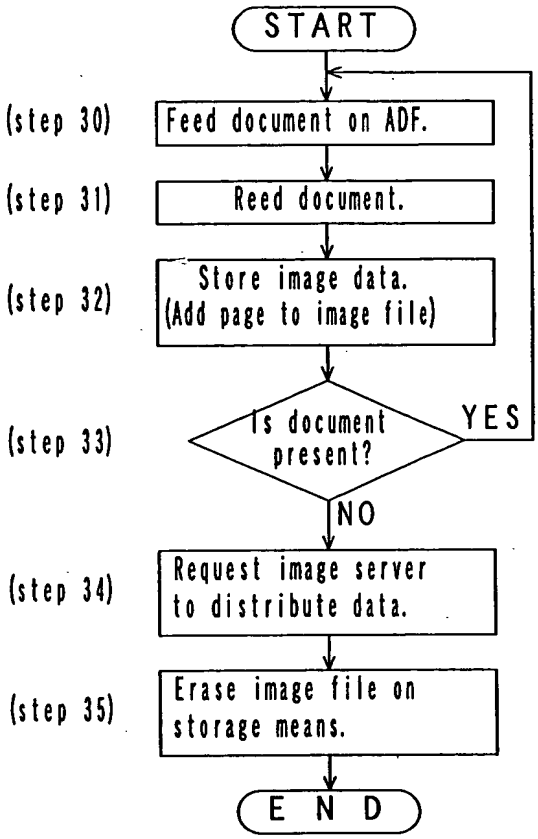
【Fig. 1】


110 : image server
111
communication processing means
112
distribution managing means
image file
table of corresponding facsimile units
distribution destination group file
113c
113a
113b
113
120 : digital multifunction (320) apparatus
memory means: 128
image input means
image input control means
image output means
image output control means
image deta
122a
122b
(325b)
125b
121a
121b
panel control means
125 : input manipulation means
125a
(325a)
communication processing means
127
buffer
124
image deta
128b
image file
bar code image deta
123a
bar code synthesizing means
123c
image ID decoding means
image managing means
image ID
123b
image ID encoding means
126
attribute table
128a

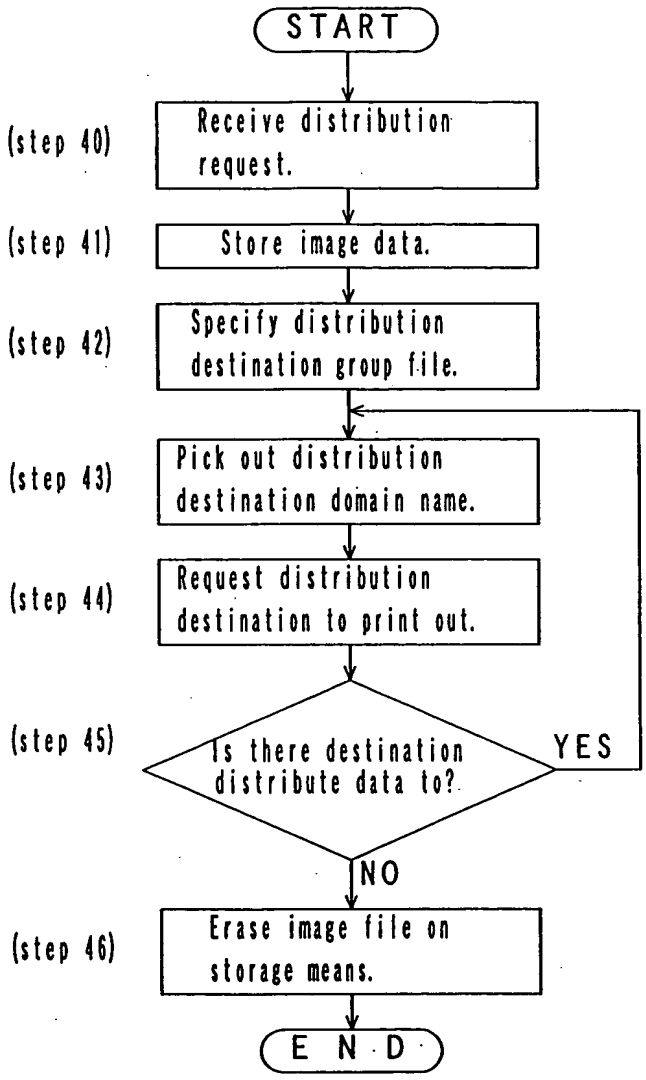
【Fig. 2】


Head office
100:LAN in the head office
140
130
110
120
150
160
200:internet
Osaka office
300:LAN in the Osaka office
340
330
320
310

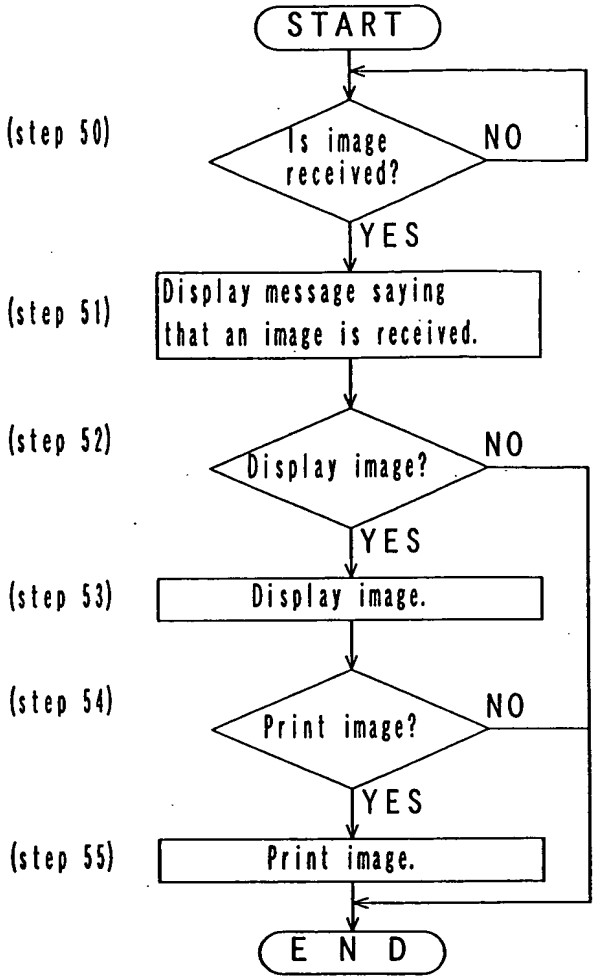
【Fig. 3】


START
(step 30)
Feed document on ADF.
(step 31)
Reed document.
(step 32)
Store image data.
(Add page to image file)
(step 33)
Is document present?
YES
NO
(step 34)
Request image server to distribute data.
(step 35)
Erase image file on storage means.
E N D

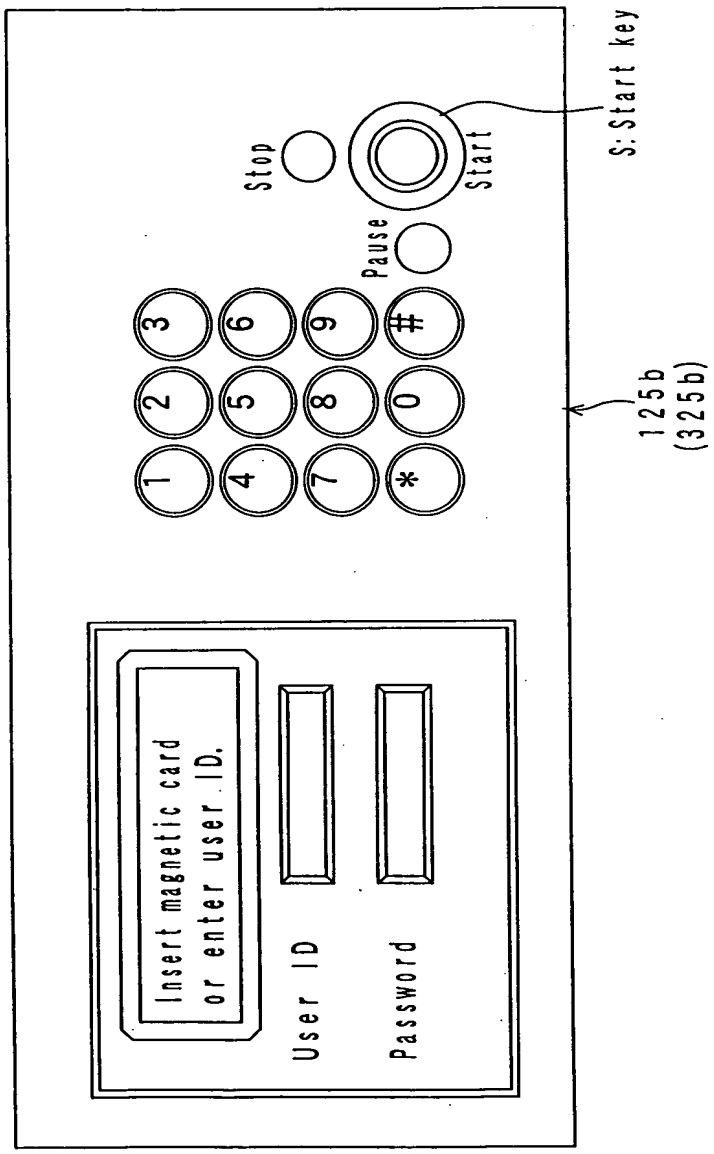
【Fig. 4】


START
(step 40)
Receive distribution request.
(step 41)
Store image data.
(step 42)
Specify distribution destination group file.
(step 43)
Pick out distribution destination domain name.
(step 44)
Request distribution destination to print out.
(step 45)
Is there destination distribute data to?
YES
NO
(step 46)
Erase image file on storage means.
E N D

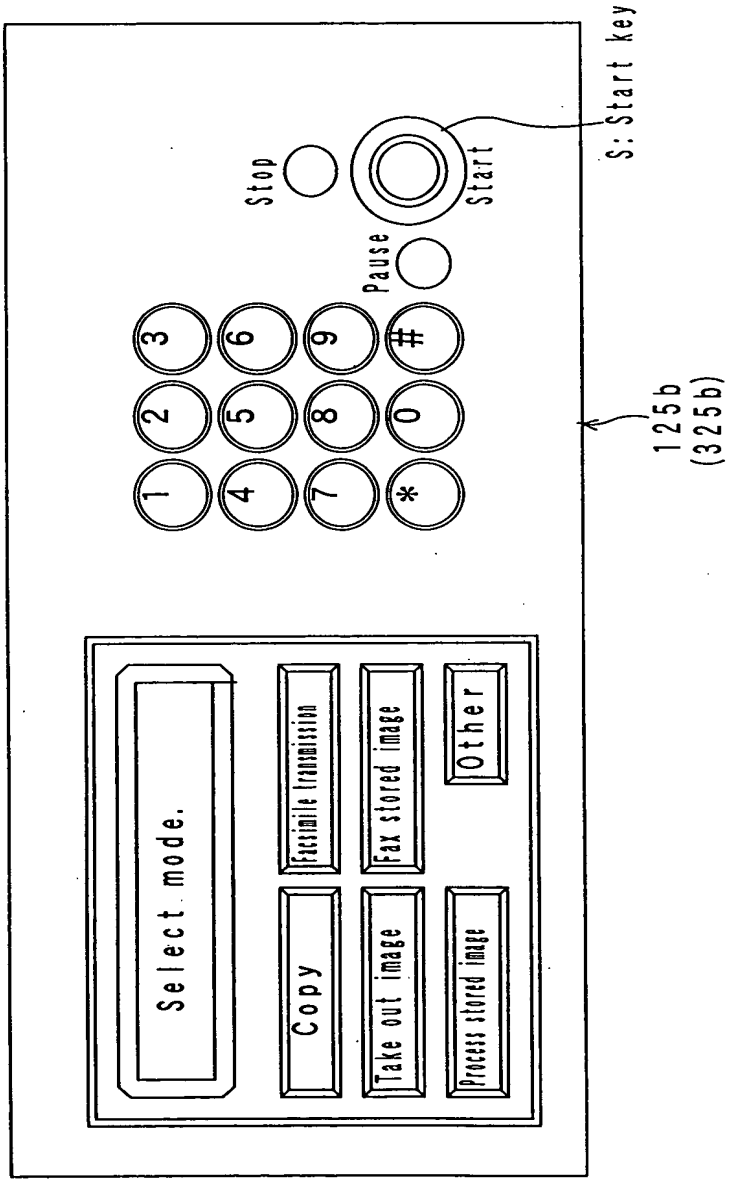
【Fig. 5】


START
(step 50)
Is image received?
NO
YES
(step 51)
Display message saying that an image is received.
(step 52)
Display image?
NO
YES
(step 53)
Display image.
(step 54)
Print image?
NO
YES
(step 55)
Print image.
E N D

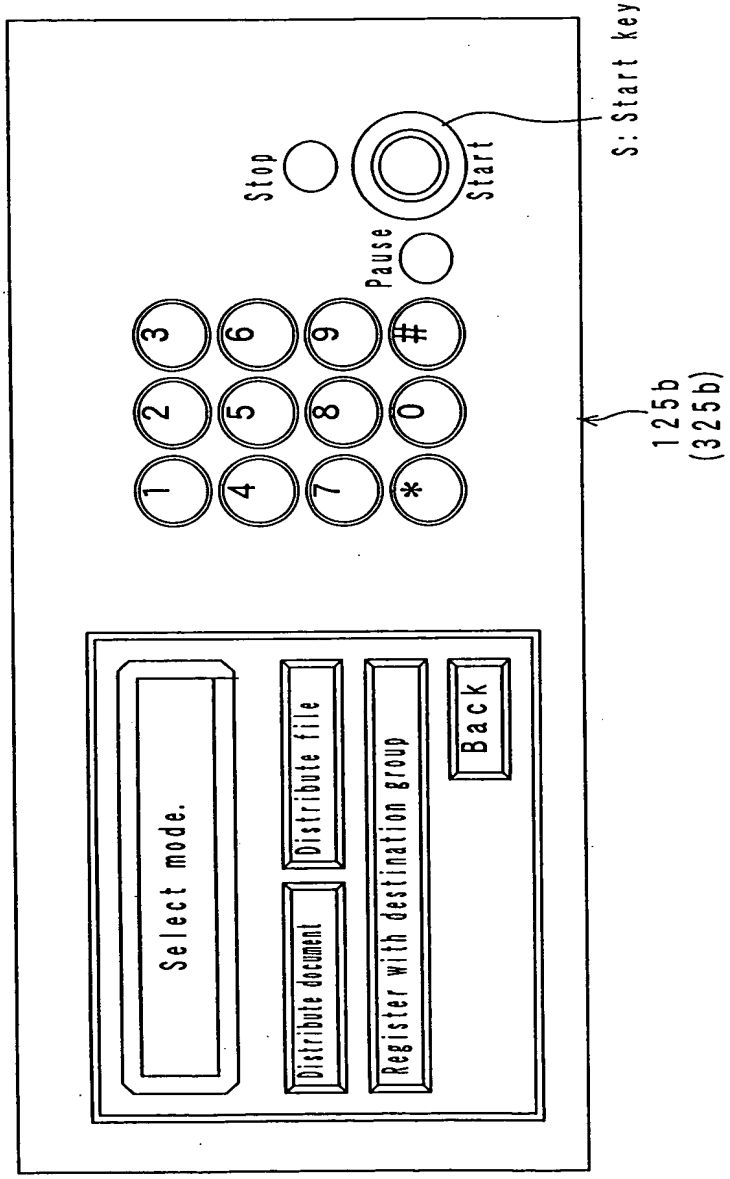
【Fig. 6】


S: Start key
Stop
Start
Pause
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
Insert magnetic card
or enter user ID.
User ID
Password
125b
(325b)

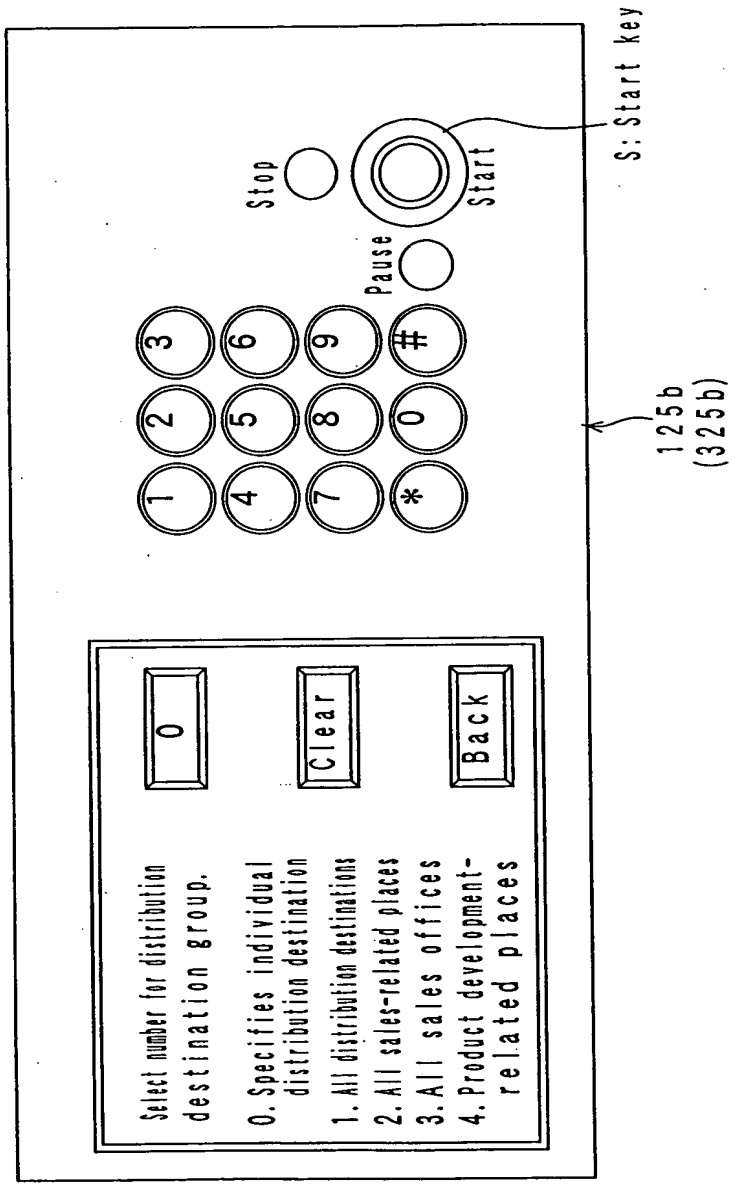
【Fig. 7】


S: Start key
Stop
Start
Pause
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
Select mode.
Copy
Facsimile transmission
Fax stored image
Other
Take out image
Process stored image
125b
(325b)

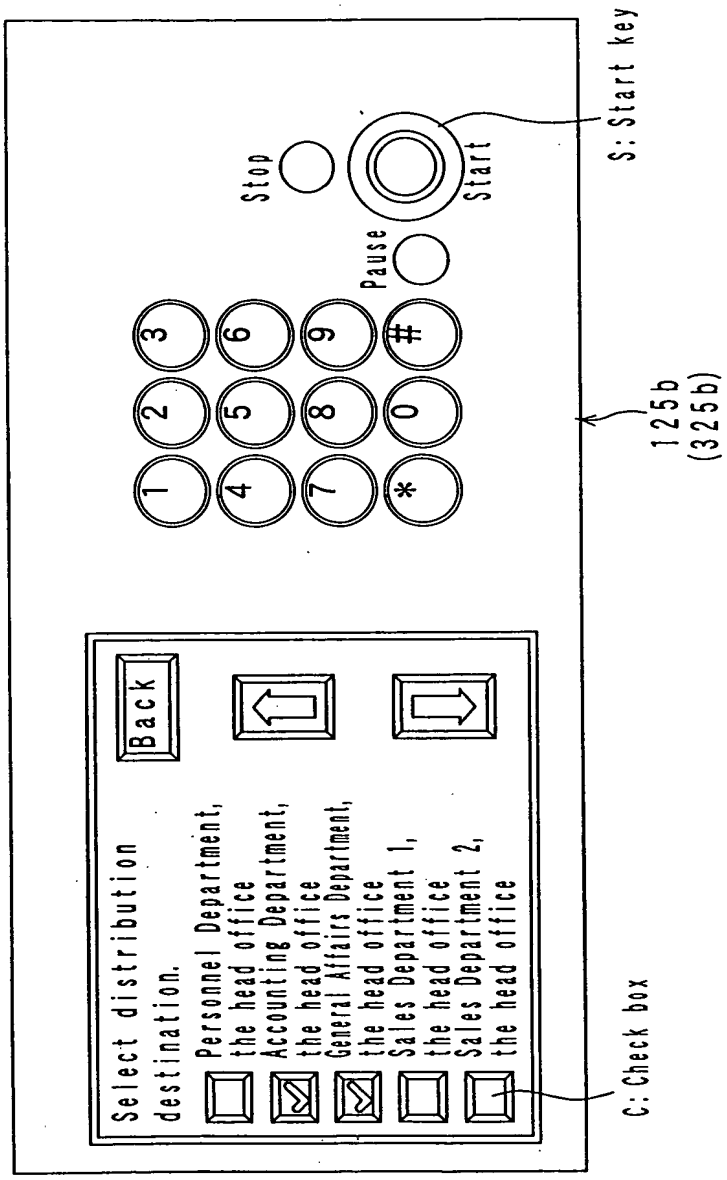
【Fig. 8】


S: Start key
Stop
Start
Pause
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
Select mode.
Distribute file
Distribute document
Register with destination group
Back
125b
(325b)

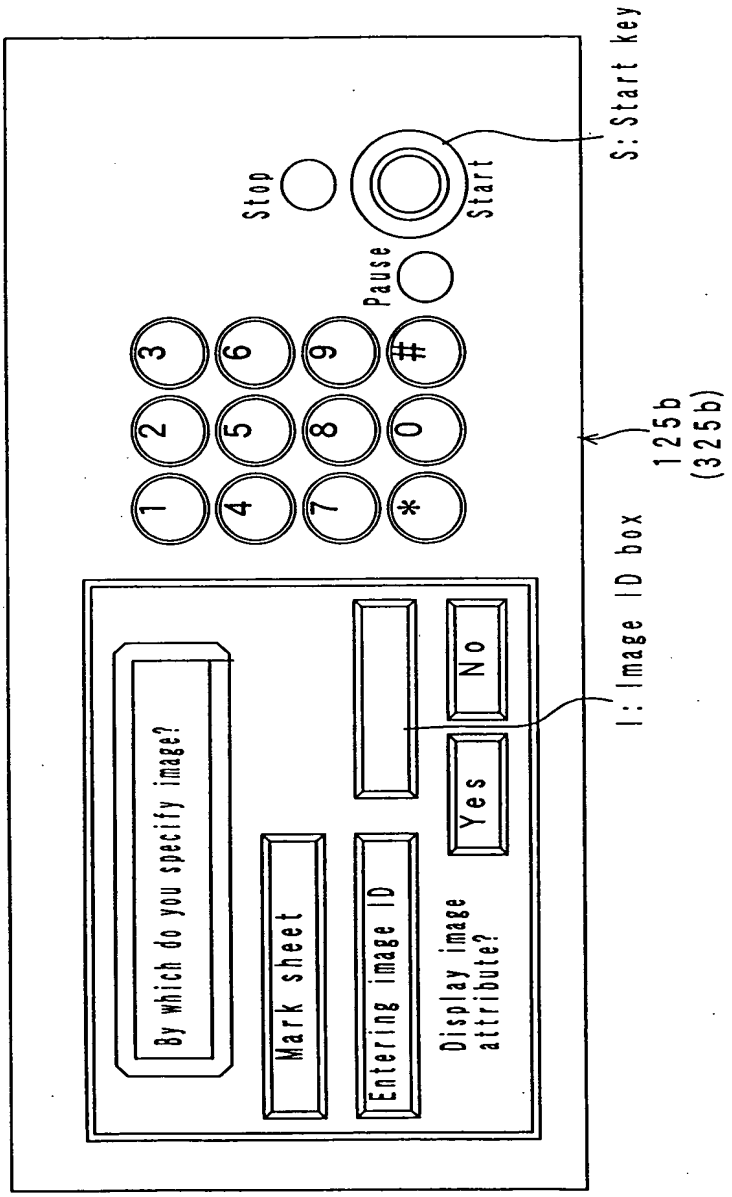
【Fig. 9】


Select number for distribution destination group.
0. Specifies individual distribution destination
1. All distribution destinations
2. All sales-related places
3. All sales offices
4. Product development-related places
0
Clear
Back
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
Pause
Stop
Start
S: Start key
125b
(325b)

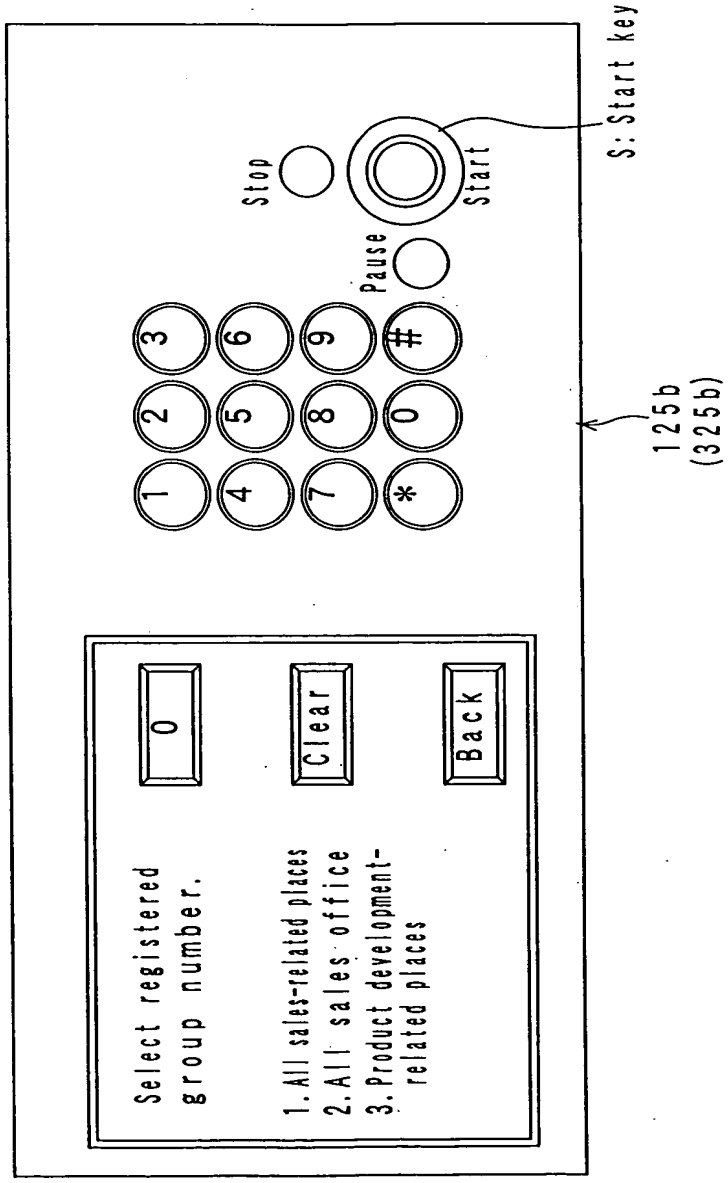
【Fig. 10】


Select distribution destination.
Back
Personnel Department, the head office
Accounting Department, the head office
General Affairs Department, the head office
Sales Department 1, the head office
Sales Department 2, the head office
C: Check box
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
Pause
Stop
Start
S: Start key
125b
(325b)

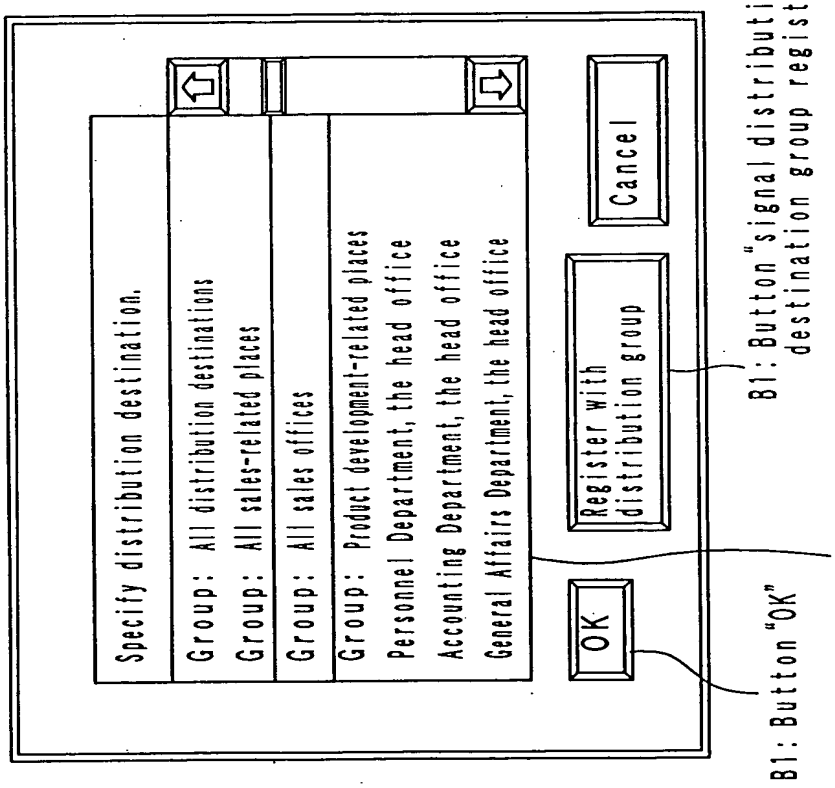
【Fig. 11】


S: Start key
Start
Stop
Pause
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
I: Image ID box
125b
(325b)
By which do you specify image?
Mark sheet
Entering image ID
Display image attribute?
Yes
No

【Fig. 12】


S: Start key
Stop
Start
Pause
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
125b
(325b)
Select registered group number.
1. All sales-related places
2. All sales office
3. Product development-related places
0
Clear
Back

【Fig. 13】


Specify distribution destination.
Group: All distribution destinations
Group: All sales-related places
Group: All sales offices
Group: Product development-related places
Personnel Department, the head office
Accounting Department, the head office
General Affairs Department, the head office
OK
Register with distribution group
Cancel
B1: Button "OK"
B1: Button "signal distribution destination group registration"
L: Signal distribution destination list

【Fig. 14】

```
#All distribution destinaons
#File name "all.rec"
jinji.hqs.mei.co.jp;     the personnel department, the head office
keiri.hqs.mei.co.jp;     the accounting department, the head office
sohmu.hqs.mei.co.jp;     the general affairs department,
                         the head office
sale1.hqs.mei.co.jp;     sales department 1, the head office
sale2.hqs.mei.co.jp;     sales department 2, the head office
saleo.hqs.mei.co.jp;     the overseas department, the head office
devl1.hqs.mei.co.jp;     development section 1 of the development
                         department, the head office
devl2.hqs.mei.co.jp;     development section 2 of the development
                         department, the head office
devl3.hqs.mei.co.jp;     development section 3 of the development
                         department, the head office
devl4.hqs.mei.co.jp;     development section 4 of the development
                         department, the head office
sale1.osk.mei.co.jp;     the sales department, the Osaka branch
devl1.osk.mei.co.jp;     the development department,
                         the Osaka branch
soumu.osk.mei.co.jp;     the general affairs department,
                         the Osaka branch
sale1.osk.mei.co.jp;     the sales department, the Nagoya branch
devl1.ngy.mei.co.jp;     the development department,
                         the Nagoya branch
soumu.ngy.mei.co.jp;     the general affairs department,
                         the Nagoya branch
sales.hkd.mei.co.jp;     the Hokkaido office
sales.sdi.mei.co.jp;     the Sendai office
sales.ngt.mei.co.jp;     the Niigata office
sales.utn.mei.co.jp;     the Utsunomiya office
sales.szk.mei.co.jp;     the Shizuoka office
sales.fko.mei.co.jp;     the Fukuoka office
sales.hrs.mei.co.jp;     the Hiroshima office
```

【Fig. 15】

```
#All sales-related places
#File name "eigyou_all.rec"
sale1.hqs.mei.co.jp;    sales department 1, the head office
sale2.hqs.mei.co.jp;    sales department 2, the head office
saleo.hqs.mei.co.jp;    the overseas department, the head office
sale1.osk.mei.co.jp;    the sales department, the Osaka branch
sale1.ngy.mei.co.jp;    the sales department, the Nagoya branch
sales.hkd.mei.co.jp;    the Hokkaido office
sales.sdi.mei.co.jp;    the Sendai office
sales.ngt.mei.co.jp;    the Niigata office
sales.utn.mei.co.jp;    the Utsunomiya office
sales.szk.mei.co.jp;    the Shizuoka office
sales.fko.mei.co.jp;    the Fukuoka office
sales.hrs.mei.co.jp;    the Hiroshima office
```

【Fig. 16】

```
#All sales office
#File name "eigyou_syo.rec"
sales.hkd.mei.co.jp;    the Hokkaido office
sales.sdi.mei.co.jp;    the Sendai office
sales.ngt.mei.co.jp;    the Niigata office
sales.utn.mei.co.jp;    the Utsunomiya office
sales.szk.mei.co.jp;    the Shizuoka office
sales.fko.mei.co.jp;    the Fukuoka office
sales.hrs.mei.co.jp;    the Hiroshima office
```

【Fig. 17】

```
#Product evelopment-related places
#File name "develop.rec"
devl1.hqs.mei.co.jp;    development section 1 of the development
                        department, the head office
devl2.hqs.mei.co.jp;    development section 2 of the development
                        department, the head office
devl3.hqs.mei.co.jp;    development section 3 of the development
                        department, the head office
devl4.hqs.mei.co.jp;    development section 4 of the development
                        department, the head office
devl1.ngy.mei.co.jp;    the development section of the
                        Nagoya branch
```

【Fig. 18】

```
All distribution destinations all.rec
All sales-related places      eigyou_all.rec
All sales office              eigyou_syo.rec
Product development-related places develop.rec
```

【Fig. 19】

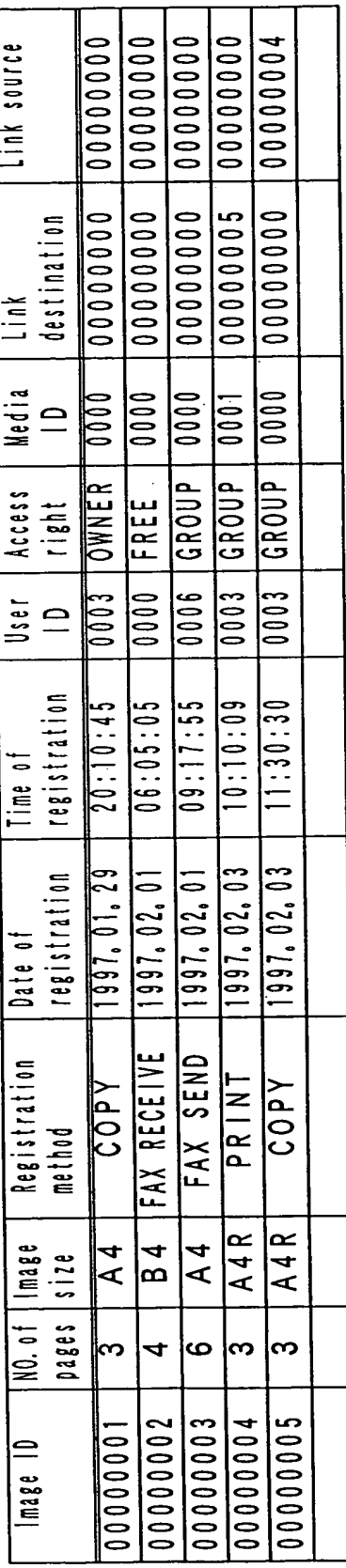


Image ID	NO. of pages	Image size	Registration method	Date of registration	Time of registration	User ID	Access right	Media ID	Link destination	Link source
00000001	3	A4	COPY	1997.01.29	20:10:45	0003	OWNER	0000	00000000	00000000
00000002	4	B4	FAX RECEIVE	1997.02.01	06:05:05	0000	FREE	0000	00000000	00000000
00000003	6	A4	FAX SEND	1997.02.01	09:17:55	0006	GROUP	0000	00000000	00000000
00000004	3	A4R	PRINT	1997.02.03	10:10:09	0003	GROUP	0001	00000005	00000000
00000005	3	A4R	COPY	1997.02.03	11:30:30	0003	GROUP	0000	00000000	00000004

128a :attribute table

【Fig. 20】

IMAGE DATA DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

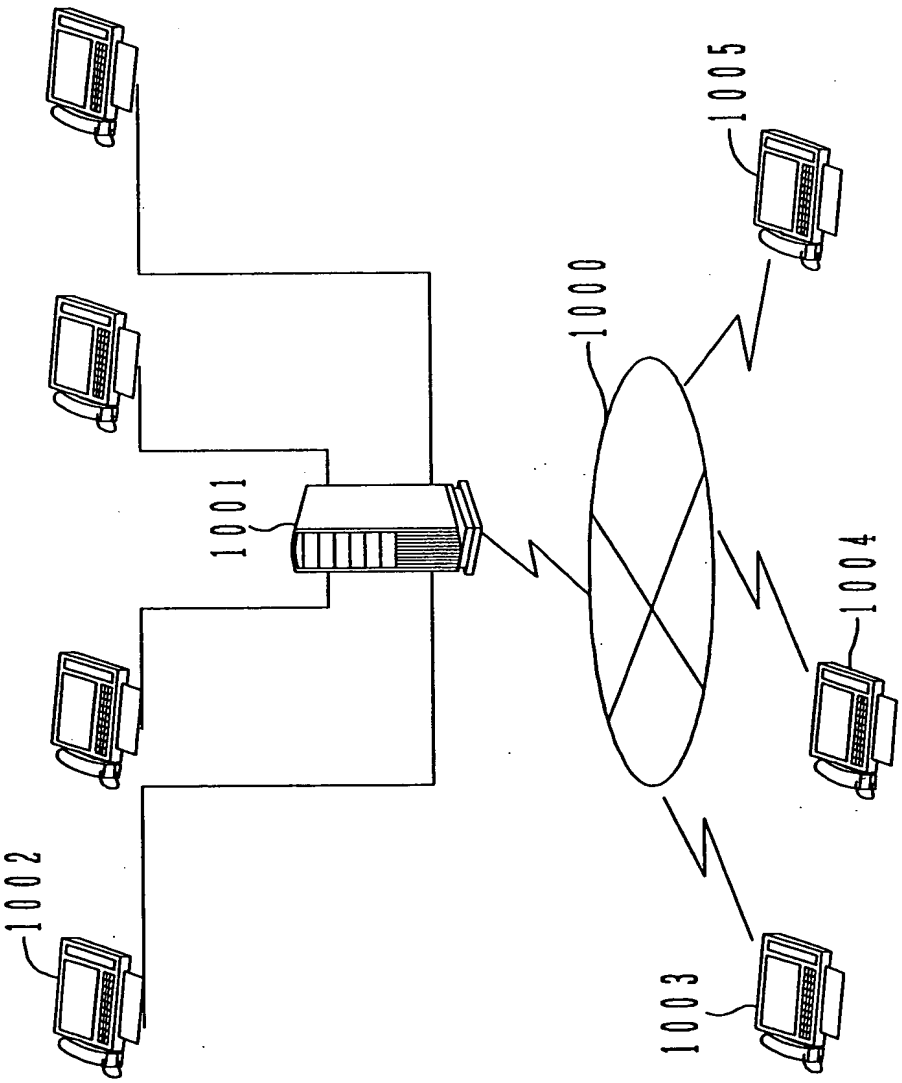
1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an image data distribution system and method of distributing image data to a plurality of image communication units connected thereto through a network.

2. Description of the Prior Art

FIG. 21 shows a typical network arrangement of the prior art image data distribution system (facsimile broadcast system). In this example, a document (image data) is sent from the facsimile unit 1002 at the head office to facsimile unit 1003 at branch office A, facsimile unit 1004 at branch office B and facsimile unit 1005 at branch office C. The system works the following way.

The facsimile unit 1002 at the head office reads a document as destination group member numbers are specified. The destination group member numbers and the document are then sent to a facsimile data distribution exchanger 1001. The image data sent is first stored in storage means such as a hard disk (not shown).

The facsimile data distribution exchanger 1001 has a list of facsimile numbers — the facsimile numbers of the facsimile unit 1003, the facsimile unit 1004 and the facsimile unit 1005 — corresponding to the destination group member numbers. The facsimile data is distributed to

【Fig. 21】